

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) An interactive system of enhancing ~~the searchability of an ability for data to be searched~~, the interactive system comprising:

a categorization system that associates search terms defining categories or attributes with items to be found;

a communication system that communicates with the categorization system and with a store of information from which information is to be selected based on the search terms; and

a cooperative facility associated with the categorization system that ~~enables~~ users, including listers and searchers, use to interactively and at least partially automatically, modify or supplement the search terms initially assigned to the items to be found by the categorization system, wherein the categorization system, communication system and cooperative facility are structured to store the modified or supplemented search terms.

2. (original) The interactive system of claim 1, in which the store of information is accessible via the Internet.

3. (currently amended) The interactive system of claim 1, in which users of the categorization system ~~enables assigning~~ assign search terms that are hierarchical and ~~enables assigning~~ assign search terms that are based on items to be found.

4. (previously presented) The interactive system of claim 1, in which the cooperative facility is accessible to the users.

5. (original) The interactive system of claim 1, in which the search terms comprise categories of items to be found that are arranged hierarchically and attributes of items defined descriptively and the categorization and attribute information is stored in a categorization and attribute database.

6. (currently amended) The interactive system of claim 1, including a dynamic add category facility that ~~dynamically enables~~ a lister of items in the store of information to usedynamically uses existing categorization and attribute data and ~~to add~~dynamically adds additional categories via the cooperative facility.

7. (currently amended) The interactive system of claim 1, including a dynamic add attributes facility that ~~dynamically enables~~ at least one searcher of items in the store of information to usedynamically uses existing categorization and attribute data and ~~to add~~dynamically adds additional attributes via the cooperative facility.

8. (currently amended) An interactive system that enhances ~~the searchability of an ability for data to be searched~~, the interactive system comprising:

a categorization system that associates search terms defining categories or attributes with items to be found;

a communication system that communicates with the categorization system and with a store of information from which information is to be selected based on the search terms; and

a cooperative facility associated with the categorization system that ~~enables~~ users, including listers and searchers, use to interactively and at least partially automatically, modify or supplement the search terms initially assigned to the items to be found by the categorization system, wherein the categorization system, communication system and cooperative facility are structured to store the modified or supplemented search terms, including a pooling facility that is operable in conjunction with the cooperative facility to limit the number of attributes displayed to users upon their initial viewing of available attributes.

9. (original) The interactive system of claim 8, in which the number of displayed attributes is less than 30.

10. (original) The interactive system of claim 8, in which the displayed attributes are selected based on the greatest number of items under a current category.

11. (original) The interactive system of claim 8, in which the displayed attributes are selected based on prior searchers' activities.

12. (original) The interactive system of claim 8, wherein displayed attributes are selected based on a current searcher's search history.

13. (previously presented) The interactive system of claim 8, in which displayed attributes are ordered based on aggregate use of attribute search terms by searchers.

14. (previously presented) The interactive system of claim 1, including a facility that groups together those attributes that are related to one another.

15. (currently amended) The interactive system of claim 1, including an attribute facility that ~~enable~~ searchers use to specify attribute selections by entry of a plurality of terms connected by Boolean expressions.

16. (currently amended) An interactive system of enhancing an ability for data to be searched, the interactive system comprising:

a categorization system that associates search terms defining categories or attributes with items to be found;

a communication system that communicates with the categorization system and with a store of information from which information is to be selected based on the search terms; and

a cooperative facility associated with the categorization system that users, including listers and searchers, use to interactively and at least partially automatically, modify or supplement the search terms initially assigned to the items to be found by the categorization system, wherein the categorization system, communication system and cooperative facility are structured to store the modified or supplemented search terms—The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the cooperative facility includes a secondary facility that imposes limitations on types of attributes permitted to be added to the database holding the attributes.

17. (original) The interactive system of claim 1, in which the cooperative facility includes a subsidiary facility that removes redundancies in categorization and attribute search terms.

18. (currently amended) An interactive system of enhancing an ability for data to be searched, the interactive system comprising:

a categorization system that associates search terms defining categories or attributes with items to be found;

a communication system that communicates with the categorization system and with a store of information from which information is to be selected based on the search terms; and

a cooperative facility associated with the categorization system that users, including listers and searchers, use to interactively and at least partially automatically, modify or supplement the search terms initially assigned to the items to be found by the categorization system, wherein the categorization system, communication system and cooperative facility are structured to store the modified or supplemented search terms—The interactive system of claim 1, wherein the cooperative facility includes an intelligent restructuring of categories and attributes facility that iteratively reviews categorization and attribute data to maintain hierarchies that maximize the degree of convergence achieved by a selection at each category level.

19. (currently amended) The interactive system of claim 2, in which users of the categorization system ~~enables assigning~~assign search terms that are hierarchical and ~~enables assigning~~ assign search terms that are based on item attributes.

20. (previously presented) The interactive system of claim 2, in which the cooperative facility is accessible to the users.

21. (previously presented) The interactive system of claim 2, in which the search terms comprise categories of items to be found that are arranged hierarchically and attributes of items defined descriptively and categorization and attribute information is stored in a categorization and attribute database.

22. (currently amended) The interactive system of claim 2, including a dynamic add attribute and category facility that ~~dynamically enables~~ a lister of items in the store of information to ~~use~~dynamically uses existing categorization and attribute data and to dynamically add additional categories via the cooperative facility.

23. (currently amended) The interactive system of claim 2, including a dynamic add attribute and category facility that ~~dynamically enables~~for searchers of items in the store of information to dynamically use existing categorization and attribute data and to dynamically add additional attributes via the cooperative facility.

24. (original) The interactive system of claim 2, including a facility that groups together those attributes that are related to one another.

25. (currently amended) The interactive system of claim 2, including a specify attribute facility that ~~enable~~ searchers use to specify attribute selections by entry of a plurality of terms connected by Boolean expressions.

26. (currently amended) An interactive system of enhancing an ability for data to be searched, the interactive system comprising:
a categorization system that associates search terms defining categories or attributes with items to be found;
a communication system that communicates with the categorization system and with a store of information from which information is to be selected based on the search terms; and
a cooperative facility associated with the categorization system that users, including listers and searchers, use to interactively and at least partially automatically, modify or supplement the search terms initially assigned to the items to be found by the categorization system, wherein the categorization system, communication system and cooperative facility are structured to store the modified or supplemented search terms~~The interactive system of claim 2,~~
in which the store of information is accessible via the Internet, and wherein the cooperative

facility includes a secondary facility that imposes limitations on types of attributes permitted to be added to the database holding the attributes.

27. (original) The interactive system of claim 2, in which the cooperative facility includes a subsidiary facility that removes redundancies in categorization and attribute search terms.

28. (currently amended) An interactive system of enhancing an ability for data to be searched, the interactive system comprising:

a categorization system that associates search terms defining categories or attributes with items to be found;

a communication system that communicates with the categorization system and with a store of information from which information is to be selected based on the search terms; and

a cooperative facility associated with the categorization system that users, including listers and searchers, use to interactively and at least partially automatically, modify or supplement the search terms initially assigned to the items to be found by the categorization system, wherein the categorization system, communication system and cooperative facility are structured to store the modified or supplemented search terms, in which the store of information is accessible via the Internet, and ~~The interactive system of claim 2,~~ wherein the cooperative facility includes an intelligent restructuring of categories and attributes facility that iteratively reviews categorization and attribute data to maintain hierarchies that maximize a degree of convergence achieved by a selection at each category level.

29. (currently amended) The interactive system of claim 1, further comprising a monitor facility that, in combination with an automatic clustering facility, minimizes the need of a search engine user to successively refine search terms in a manual fashion, by monitoring which particular result-items a user has historically chosen to visit.

30. (currently amended) A computer implemented method of searching for data items in a data store, the method comprising the steps of:

operating a computer-based communication system that effects communications between a plurality of data searchers and the data store containing the data items;

operating a search engine that ~~enables~~ the data searchers use to enter initial key words describing data items to be found;

receiving over the computer-based communication system selected data items that are responsive to the initial key words in a given order of items, organized into successive viewable pages;

initiating a manual review of the received selected data items; and

operating on a computing device an automatic clustering tool that is responsive to the items manually perused by the data searcher, including items not reviewed by the data searcher, the automatic clustering tool responding to action by users, including listers and data searchers, by interactively creating and storing categorization criteria by which at least a portion of the received selected data items are reordered or filtered ~~for being to be~~ viewed by the data searcher, by which a further search is performable with results that are based thereon.

31. (original) The method of claim 30, in which the automatic clustering tool responds to a searcher's data item perusal activity in a prior session.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 30, in which the automatic clustering tool constantly revises the categorization criteria in response to continuous reviewing of the selected data items by the data searchers.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 30, in which the automatic clustering tool is responsive to a given data searchers' reviewing activity over a period of time.

34. (currently amended) A method that searches for data items in a data store, the method comprising the steps of:

operating a computer-based communication system that effects communications between a plurality of data searchers and the data store containing the data items;

operating a search engine that enables the data searchers to enter initial key words

describing data items to be found;

receiving selected data items that are responsive to the initial key words in a given order of items, organized into successive viewable pages;

initiating a manual review of the received selected data items; and

operating an automatic clustering tool that is responsive to the items manually perused by the data searcher, including items not reviewed by the data searcher, the automatic clustering tool responding to action by users, including listers and data searchers, by interactively creating and storing categorization criteria by which at least a portion of the received selected data items are reordered or filtered ~~for being~~to be viewed by the data searcher, by which a further search is performable with results that are based thereon, in which the automatic clustering tool eliminates selected data items from being viewed by the data searcher, based on the successively created categorization criteria.

35. (original) The method of claim 30, including creating search context for a search session and saving search context from a prior search session to a subsequent search session.